

# Gin and on it at Le Cocó

Sundays (if you let them) can frankly be a little bit rubbish. And in the winter – even worse. Chances are you're nursing a mild to moderate hangover. There's life admin to smash. And then the potential doom that often comes when you spy the return to work on the horizon.

This often means that Sundays don't have that carefree Friday feeling. They're the waiting room for the working week. However, as I discovered last Sunday, it definitely doesn't have to be that way and Sunday Funday most certainly doesn't have to remain as some intangible insta friendly phrase – especially not in this city.



[Le Cocó](#), the cosy little Chueca spot that I [reviewed](#) back in the summer, is now playing host to '**Gin and Cookie**' **afternoons**. You show up, you drink gin, you eat cookies. There's not much not to love. Between 5-8pm on both Saturdays and Sundays, there's a DJ on the decks helping you to keep

your party pants on until your alarm pretty much goes off on a Monday morn.



In my [previous Le Cocó post](#) I mentioned just how how lovely the decor is and now that winter is really starting to bite, it's the perfect place to bunker down for an afternoon and enjoy some copas in good company.





It goes without saying that each bite of the cookies was well worth the calories. The red velvet ones in particular deserve a mention as I could've happily munched the lot – but clearly needed to leave some room for the perfectly mixed G&Ts.





So if like me, you're keen to eek out the dregs of the weekend until the bitter end, make a date at Le Cocó. Remember, the weekend isn't over until the fat lady sings. Or in this case, you've eaten all the cookies.

## Info

- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) & [Website](#)
  - **Address:** C/ Calle de Barbieri, 15
  - **Metro:** Chueca
  - **Phone:** 915 21 99 55
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# Panifiesto, a bread-lover's paradise in Lavapiés

When I first moved to Madrid, I had a few initial goals: get an apartment, make new friends, and find a badass bakery where I could satisfy my carb cravings—not necessarily in that order. I don't know what it is, but there's something about bread that makes me feel right at home. For me, it's the ultimate comfort food and the simplest culinary pleasure. So when I moved to a new city thousands of miles from home, finding good bread was clearly a priority.

Luckily for me, it didn't take long. Soon after I moved into my apartment in Lavapiés, I stumbled upon the perfect place entirely by chance. [Panifiesto](#) doesn't look like much from the outside—or the inside, for that matter. It's a minuscule, minimalist space on the corner of Calle Mesón de Paredes and Calle Juanelo. The tiny storefront features a bench and a counter, behind which the fresh bread is displayed on tall metal shelves. If you peek through the loaves, you can see the

magic happening in the kitchen in the back.



When it comes to bread, I've learned that simple is almost always better, and Panifiesto confirms that conclusion. All they do is bread—no pastries, empanadas, or even *tostadas*. You can't come here for breakfast or a drink with friends. In fact, you might not even notice it if you aren't specifically looking.





They offer around five to eight varieties each day: wheat, whole wheat, rye, spelt, baguettes, and *gallego* (half wheat, half rye) are almost always available. Some days they also have *tritordeum* (a grain that's a combination of wheat and barley), seeded (full of poppy seeds, sunflower seeds, and more), and heavenly golden-hued corn bread (my personal favorite). Also look out for seasonal specialties, like the raisin, rosemary, and honey loaves they offered last Semana Santa.





ESPELTA  
4'80%

TRIBUNA  
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CENTRA



The prices are, naturally, a bit more than you might be used to paying for bread: €1.35 for a baguette or €3-5 for a full loaf. You can also buy half a loaf for half the price, and they'll slice it for you if you ask!

So what exactly makes this bread special? The short answer is that it's made with *masa madre*. If you're as gluten-obsessed as I am, you know what that means. If not, pay attention, because this is important. There's not an easy English equivalent for this term. The closest thing we have is "sourdough," but while all sourdough is *pan de masa madre*, not all *pan de masa madre* is what you might think of as sourdough.

Essentially, it means that the bread is made without chemical leaveners like baking powder—just flour, water, and salt. It rises due to the natural bacteria in the dough (sometimes called a pre-ferment or "mother dough"), making it denser and lending it a slightly sour flavor. You can bake any kind of bread with this method, as you can see from the variety of options on offer at Panifiesto.

Have I convinced you yet? If not, I dare you to go to this place and not immediately fall in love. Forget about the sad, stale *barras* at your local *alimentación*, set aside a few extra euros, and indulge in some of the best bread money can buy. It's worth it.

## Info

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#)
  - **Phone:** 694 44 90 20
  - **Address:** Calle Mesón de Paredes, 10
  - **Metro:** Tirso de Molina & La Latina
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# **Trikki, homemade New Orleans cuisine with family recipes**

Trikki restaurant was opened in Chamberí about a year ago by owners Yuliet McQuitty (New Orleans) and Rodolfo Rodriguez (Venezuela), and together they've brought the spirit of New Orleans to the neighborhood. As soon as you walk in, you'll feel a refreshingly down-to-earth ambience and lots of jazz-inspired decor, from drum-shaped lamp shades to drawings of musicians and trumpets on the walls.



Yuliet will graciously greet you and walk you through the whole menu; while each dish will be prepared from scratch by Rodolfo, a.k.a. "the kitchen commander." Everything at Trikki is made from traditional home recipes and select ingredients



to bring the authentic flavors of New Orleans to your table.



The menu features all the city's classics: **fried green tomatoes, gumbo, jambalaya, po' boys and the famous bananas foster dessert.** You'll also find a few Venezuelan items



sprinkled in there. Since it was our first time trying New Orleans cuisine, Yuliet suggested we order their signature dishes – all packed with flavor and spices.

**Here's how it went down:**



We started with a **half-portion of fried green tomatoes**, a delicious introduction to what followed.





Next up was the **gumbo, a hearty New Orleans stew** filled with rice, chicken, sausage, langoustine and so many other delicious ingredients. What stood out to me the most was the okra – I don't think I've ever had okra in Madrid.



Then we had the ultimate **jambalaya**. This rice dish is on the spicy side, so Yuliet recommends people try it on their second visit to Trikki, unless you like a little kick to your meal. It turned out to be James' favorite dish of the night.





Yuliet also said a true New Orleans experience wouldn't be complete without trying one of the Po' boys, which are essentially gigantic sandwiches. We ordered the one with soft-shell crab, lettuce, tomato and a special sauce. So good.



Needless to say, we had a full-on feast! So when we got to the homemade dessert section, we ordered what seemed like the lightest option: *quesillo*, a typical Venezuelan dessert that's similar to flan with a hint of lime.

On our next visit we'll save room for the New Orleans's classic: bananas foster, served on a dish that they flambé right in front of you. We did get the chance to watch the pyrotechnics at the table next to us, however, and it looked amazing!

Here's a pic of the bananas foster from Trikki's [instagram](#) so you get the idea.





So when it comes down to it, Trikki's concept is rather simple: home recipes, traditional ingredients and Southern hospitality, which makes for a great combination. Just make sure to go with a good appetite and friends who like to try new dishes and flavors.

## **Trikki**

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
- **Address:** Calle Santa Engracia 109
- **Metro:** Alonso Cano

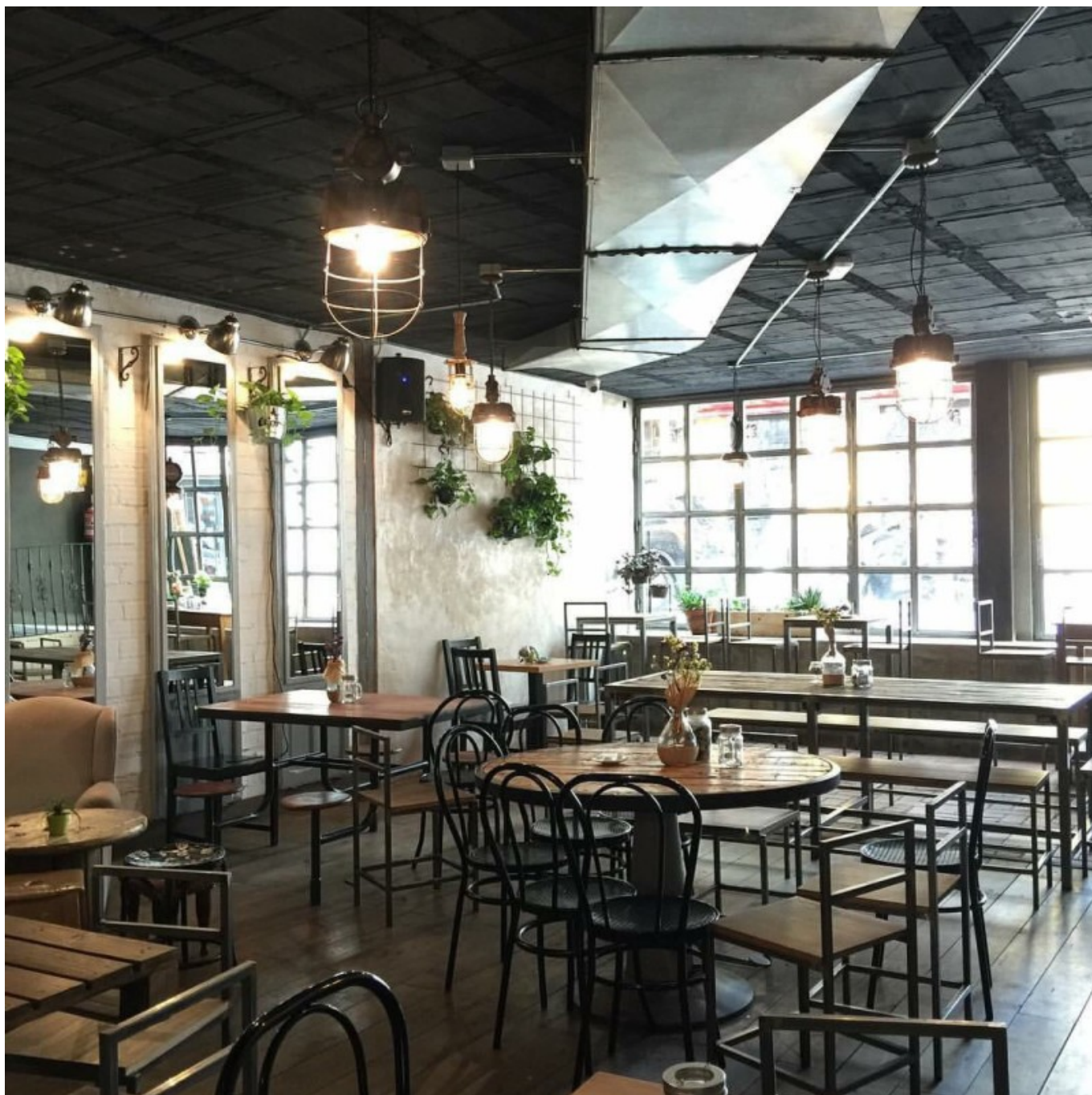
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# Slow down at Slow Mex Madrid

Julie Andrews once sang about *these are a few of my favorite things* and if I were to pen some similar lyrics they would read along the lines of: *margaritas, tacos and anything with a bit of spice*.

In light of this, a long Saturday lunch spent at [Slow Mex](#) wasn't exactly a hardship. **A low key Mexican joint on Calle San Vicente Ferrer, that does a very nice sideline in craft beers** is the ideal place to bunker down for the afternoon now that coat season is well and truly upon us in Madrid.





Slow Mex has a big open space that feels slightly reminiscent to a pub back in Blighty (again, this could be thanks to the array of beers on tap). It feels like an unpretentious neighbour who invites you over and makes you feel instantly at home.

As it's essentially a mecca for all things Mexican, all the standard offerings are present on the menu. **Tacos, nachos, burritos** – they're all there. However, the homemade grub does offer a couple of **fun twists** on the to-be-expected tortilla based treats.



We tried a fairly unusual starter. It was sort of similar to a kind of chowder but with a kick and studded with spicy prawns; it brought me back to life after a particularly boozy evening the night before. We rounded off the leisurely lunch with a brownie.

Again, it was a slightly pimped up version of an old favorite as this pud offered up sugar and spice – as it had just touch of chilli in it. It was downright delicious and had us reaching for one last margarita for the road.





**Special mention has to go to the Maitre D, Mark.** He towed the line between clearly knowing his stuff (and wanting to share it with us) and being attentive enough without us feeling like we had a third person dining with us, which can sometimes be the case. He also pointed out that they have a happy hour. Am I the only one who views winter as the perfect excuse for day drinking? Surely not.

Either way, **we left Slow Mex giggling and gloriously full.** Thanks to the crispy duck tacos that I'm still thinking about, the diet can always wait until tomorrow. I'm just thinking of my winter insulation and working on my extra layer in the meantime.

**by @littlemissmadrid**

## Slow Mex Madrid

- [Facebook](#), [Website](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Calle de San Vicente Ferrer 33
  - **Metro:** Tribunal or Noviciado
  - **Phone:** 915 326 791
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## El Brote: a brand-new mushroom restaurant in the heart of El Rastro

Mushrooms: they're an inspiring subject one can easily get carried away with, especially after paying a visit to El Brote. Years of academic mushroom knowledge and on-the-ground wisdom were literally delivered to us on a plate and I'm now a devout mushroom apostle on a mission to spread the message to the foodie people of Madrid.





El Brote's dining area

El Brote (the bud) is a small and cosy restaurant on [Calle de la Ruda](#) run by two mushroom enthusiasts, Eduardo and Alvaro. Every corner of the place is mushroom-themed, even the floor. Its décor is earthy, humble and a little eccentric, and the original features of the building have been beautifully highlighted throughout the room.



Abstract mushroom artwork





Various gospels of the mushroom bible



The 0th floor of El Brote





A mushroomy display inside the floor

Both Eduardo and Alvaro were keen to explain each dish on their 10-item menu and made recommendations based on the season and their own personal preferences which, funnily enough, were different.

*There's a specific order in which you must eat each ingredient.*

... they explained as each dish was brought out. They suggested we start with the unseasoned mushrooms so that we could taste their pure flavour, then slowly begin combining the other ingredients together to get a feel for the dish as a whole. The flavours were subtle and delicious both separately and collectively – a sign that someone behind the scenes really knows what they're doing.



Trumpet mushrooms with a raw egg yolk and herbs





Red mushrooms with pak choy, gnocchi and pumpkin gratin



Black mushrooms with beans, squash and leek

Try their wine too, it's really good. We also noticed that every single table in the restaurant was sharing a bottle of red between them... such a beautiful sight.

**TIP:** El Brote have very few tables and they don't take evening reservations so aim to be the first to arrive as we were, because within 10 minutes of arriving, the place will be full!

## INFO

- [Website](#), [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - Address: [Calle de la Ruda, 14](#)
  - Nearest metro: La Latina, line 5
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# Loveliness at Lateral

When I first moved to Madrid I walked that well trodden path like so many ex-pats had done before me; the month long TEFL course. I rocked up with my Spanish phrase book, some SPF 20 and the overwhelming desire to live abroad. With no set plan (well, with no actual plan at all having quit my job in PR back in London) I quickly got into the groove of my new TEFL timetable; which essentially meant a 3pm finish. As soon as my 'working' day was done, I would wile away afternoons in Plaza Santa Ana.



Plaza Santa Ana

Now I don't spend too much time around that neck of the woods these days, but back then I was literally intoxicated by that square. The beautiful balconies, the long sunny days (I

arrived in August) and I even found charm in the guys who play the accordion and then hustle for your change. The large majority of those afternoons were spent on the terraza of [restaurante Lateral](#).

Seriously, the limited savings that I arrived with dwindled at lightning speed thanks to my newfound obsession with their ***croquetas de jamón*** and ***tinto de verano***. It became a spot that I still think of fondly, as it kind of represents those heady first months when everything was an adventure and my sole preoccupation was how many hours could I spend tanning that day and where was I going out that night.





So [Lateral](#) and I have enjoyed an enduring partnership and now that I live on the other side of Gran Via I thought I'd mix

things up and visit one of their other outposts on Calle Fuencarral. I'd heard on the grape vine that it had undergone a recent renovation (and I can't just rely on Pinterest for interiors inspo) so it seemed like a win win.



So onto the décor, it is in a nutshell delightful. But obviously we're talking about a restaurant here, so I can't not mention the food. Lateral is all about the tapas – so you can literally try a little bit of everything in perfectly bite sized portions.

In addition, if you have [visiting guests](#) or you're just a first timer to the city, you'll love that Lateral puts a modern spin on Spanish classics. You can find all the well-known favourites such as **tortilla de patata** and **albondigas** (meatballs); alongside more inventive small plates such as delicious **duck ravioli** and a melt-in-the-mouth **carpaccio**.





Food wise [Lateral](#) is what I would describe as a safe bet. Yes it might not be the most inventive cuisine, but what they offer up always hits the spot. It also doesn't hurt that it's super reasonably priced for a city centre find, and **they serve food all day.**

My friend and I were also pleased as punch to discover that they boast a **happy hour on drinks** – ideal if you enjoy a lunch that's more liquid than most and I can attest that the service is always friendly and fast. Whilst the terraza isn't quite as pleasing on the eye as the Plaza Santa Ana locale, the phrase "it's what's on the inside that counts" that rings true here.



**Inside it's an oasis within the city,** filled with plenty of plants and enough greenery to make you feel like you're embracing nature, in spite of being mere moments from the hustle and bustle of one of Madrid's main shopping streets. If spontaneity is your thing (let's face it, we're not talking about a country when peeps really plan ahead), restaurante Lateral is the kind of place that you can pitch up at, eat well and feel as though you've sampled a little bit of Spain's finest.



## Restaurante Lateral:

- [Website](#) & [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#)
  - **Address:** Calle Fuencarral, 43
  - **Phone:** 915316877
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## Where to Take Your Mom in Madrid – Round 2

Knowing where to take your mom in Madrid can be tough, especially if she's already visited you five or six times. So here's a follow-up to my [first version](#) of this post with some fresh ideas, some favorites, and some recommendations from fellow Naked Madrid writers – and my mom, too, of course. She also helped me edit this whole piece. Thanks ma!

Not to mention these ideas are great for any out-of-town guests. Here goes:

### **1. Museo del Romanticismo for an intimate art experience**



Madrid has several charming museums worth visiting, and if you're like me, you'll appreciate their small size. My mom and I loved [Museo de Artes Decorativas](#) and [Museo Naval](#); but we enjoyed [Museo del Romanticismo](#) the most. Something about wandering around someone's former mansion makes it unique, and each room tells a different story. Just stay on the grey carpet or the attendant will scold you, like she did my mom when she wanted to take a closer look at the 19th-century furnishings and art! Plus it has a wonderful tea room.

For more ideas, check out [Madrid's obvious and not-so-obvious museums \(and how to get in for free!\)](#)

## **2. Mad Improv events for fun and laughter**





This was such a great discovery. My mom has been to Madrid several times over my ten years of living here, yet we never quite found the right way to spend an evening out that didn't just involve food. [Mad Improv](#) is an English-speaking theater group that holds shows (right now on Thursdays at La Escalera de Jacob) and regular workshops and jams at [VeraContent](#) (Naked Madrid's sister company).

Jams cost 3€ and include a first drink. Anyone is welcome to get up and join in on improv games, or you can just watch if you're on the shyer side – understandably so, as you'll see some pretty impressive improvisors up there. Either way, you're going to laugh a whole lot. I promise.

Here's a [full post on Mad Improv](#) to find out more.

### 3. Juana la Loca for excellent Spanish food



Juana la Loca is an exceptional family-run restaurant in La Latina, serving Spanish food with lots of fusion and lots of love. Everything you eat here is exquisite, from the *pintxos* at the bar to the main dishes. I had been several times before I finally got the chance to speak to one of the family members, the son, who explained everything on the menu with such passion. Culinary arts clearly run in the family.

### 4. Bosco de Lobos and Ana la Santa for cozy and chic dining





I wanted to include a few more restaurants on this list so I asked for recommendations from [Cat](#), one of Naked Madrid's most active writers. With no hesitation at all, she said: "[Bosco de Lobos](#) and [Ana la Santa](#) are both mum pleasers!" Bosco de Lobos is situated in a beautiful courtyard of an architecture school in Chueca, and its casual-chic look immediately lures you in. Ana la Santa also has a great location, right in Plaza Santa Ana. Cat especially recommends going here when it's cold outside, as it's the perfect place to warm up.

Check out [Cat](#)'s articles on [Bosco de Lobos](#) and [Ana la Santa](#) – I'd definitely take her word for it.

## 5. Chuka for Japanese ramen and gyozas



Once you've had your taste of Spanish food, you shouldn't feel bad about going to an [international restaurant](#). Really, it's okay. Madrid's culinary scene is full of fusion cuisine from all over the world, and Madrileños love it. [Chuka](#) is one of our all-time favorites for ramen, gyozas and baos. And we just found out the owners are actually two Americans who have been living in Madrid for over a decade. Go figure!

Here's a full post on [Chuka](#). Another great restaurant nearby is [L'Artisan Furansu Kitchen](#), offering French-Japanese fusion cuisine and a *menú del día* that changes daily.

## 6. Salmon Guru for fun cocktails

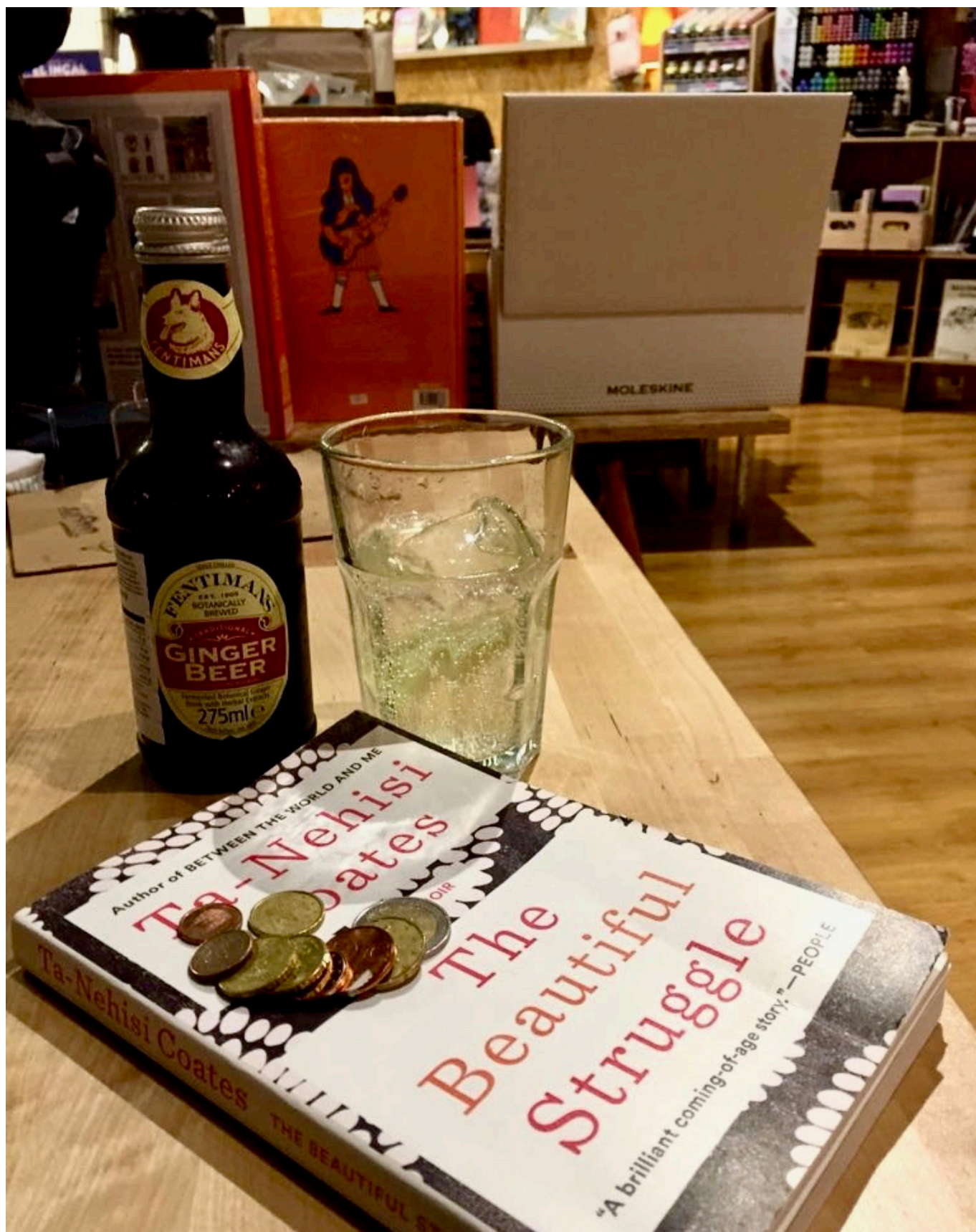




Before going into Chuka we had a half hour to kill so we walked down the street and got a drink at [Salmon Guru](#). This funky bar has a great cocktail selection and truly unique decor. If we'd stayed a little longer and sampled another round, my mom thinks we might have solved the mystery of what "Salmon Guru" actually means.

Read our full post on [Salmon Guru here](#).

**7. Swinton & Grant for when you're working**



Coffee shops are always great places to park your mom while you're working (or napping). If she hasn't brought her own book with her, she'll surely find something to read at [Swinton & Grant](#) – a café that sells art books and also has a



downstairs gallery – while enjoying a *cortado*, a spicy ginger soda, or a beer.

Another one of my mom's favorites, mentioned in the [previous article](#), is [Café La Libre](#), right by the Reina Sofia museum. She couldn't resist going back twice on her most recent visit. And we always make a pit-stop at [Desperate Literature](#) to check out their international book selection and delightful event calendar.

## **8. Templo de Debod for stunning views**



This beautiful ancient Egyptian temple is perched on a hill providing breathtaking views of the city, making it the perfect spot to watch the sunset or have a picnic. [Templo de Debod](#) is also a great place to walk to after a visit to the Royal Palace or the [Cerralbo Museum](#) which are both a hop skip away. You'll find a free-entrance museum inside the temple – one of [Mad Improv](#)'s organizers, Summer, said her parents loved



it.

## 9. Casa Pueblo for another cocktail



I've been going to this bar since my first year in Madrid. You can bring anyone here – a date, a friend, a colleague. There's something warm and special about [Casa Pueblo](#) that makes me keep coming back. And my mom couldn't agree more. There's also a small stage in the back where they regularly put on live music.

## 10. The Rastro for a Sunday flea market experience



pic from [Madrid No Frills](#)

When I asked for a recommendation from [Leah](#), she said: “My mum absolutely loves the Rastro, of course. She wants to buy everything but can’t fit it in her suitcase, but she always manages to squeeze something in like a spoon!”

Leah has been writing about and capturing the Rastro for years on her awesome blog, [Madrid No Frills](#), and instagram accounts [@rastrolife](#) and [@portaitofmadrid](#). Here’s her latest Rastro-inspired post: [Seven eccentric museum-worthy collections found only in the Rastro](#)

## 11. Shopping day in Malasaña – and a mandatory drink afterwards





Mojitos at Cubanismo, a rooftop bar in Malasaña

When it comes to shopping, I like getting it over with in one shot on Calle Fuencarral (which merges with Gran Vía if you want to hit all the big stores like Zara and H&M). Afterwards, there's beer and tapas waiting for you at some of our favorite spots. I recommend going into one of the happening food markets in the area – [Mercado de San Ildefonso](#) or [Mercado de San Anton](#) – both with great outdoor seating areas.

Another amazing place for a post-shopping drink is El Paracaídas. This multi-story and multi-purpose concept store actually has two rooftops – our favorite is [Cubanismo, a tropical rooftop escape!](#)

## **12. Food tour for insight into Spanish**

## bar culture and cuisine



Another Naked Madrid writer, Melissa, recently went on the [Context Tavernas and Tapas Tour](#) in Barrio de las Letras. Melissa is a true foodie, and works as a full-time writer and translator at [VeraContent](#), where she researches Spanish food on a daily basis. She said the culinary tour was truly insightful, and a wonderful way to better understand the history and nuances behind Spain's delicious cuisine as you enjoy every bite.

Read Melissa's full article on the [Context Travel Tours](#) here.

Don't forget to read round one of [Where to Take Your Mom in Madrid](#) for more ideas!



You might also like: [Take a Peek Inside 5 Historical Madrid Bars](#)

Of course Madrid is full of more options that mothers will love, so please feel free to share in the comments!

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## Context Tavernas and Tapas, a culinary tour through the bars of Huertas

If you've done any traveling lately, you might have noticed that **food tours are rapidly becoming a global trend**. Companies around the world now offer guided visits to restaurants, bars, and markets, promising to let you in on culinary secrets or show you how to eat like a local. Madrid is no exception. In fact, this city has more than its share of options, thanks to its vibrant dining scene and world-famous cuisine.

I recently had the chance to participate in a food tour for the very first time, thanks to [Context Travel](#). The company offers "**tours for the intellectually curious**" in cities across the world, including several in the Spanish capital. Many are focused on history or art, but this one was especially intriguing: [Savoring Madrid: Tavernas and Tapas](#).

According to the Context website, the goal of this culinary tour is to define the concept of tapas through tastings at *tavernas* in the city center. Like all of their [Madrid tours](#), it's meant to offer an in-depth look at local culture,

customs, and in this case, cuisine. But considering the dozens of bars, restaurants, and specialty dishes that are scattered throughout the city, how could it be possible to cover such a broad topic in just 3 hours? That's what I intended to find out.



Intricate mosaics decorate the exterior of one of the many historic bars in Huertas.

## Hungry for history

The tour began at 7pm outside the Westin Palace hotel, close to many of Madrid's main tourist attractions. Context limits the size of their tours to create a personalized experience—this one consisted only of me and a couple who were on vacation.

Our guide was Tessy Carrada, a culinary journalist of Mexican origin who moved to Madrid a few years ago. She started off by



explaining the basics, with the help of maps and diagrams: **what are tapas, where did they come from, and how are they eaten?** What makes Spain's cuisine unique? What can you expect when you go out for tapas in Madrid?

Next she told us how the tour would work. We'd visit three or four places, all in the Huertas neighborhood (also known as [Barrio de las Letras](#)). The idea was to show us non-touristy spots, the kinds of places locals go, where we'd get a **true taste of the local culture**. At each place, she would order a few tapas to share, taking into account our preferences, interests, and appetites. With the ground rules laid out, we set off into the city.

## Cervecería Cervantes



First up was a true classic, a place that was packed with customers even at the early hour of 7:30pm. We ordered drinks,

and Tessy explained the particularities of Spanish brewing as we admired the collection of beer cans displayed on the restaurant's walls. The waiter brought out a plate of giant olives and mussels, exemplifying the tradition of providing something to snack on along with every drink.







Tessy then ordered several *raciones* to share: **ham croquetas with padrón peppers, manchego cheese, and jamón ibérico.** As we ate, she offered insight on each and every item: how to make *croquetas*, what makes Spanish ham so special, and how to distinguish true *manchego* from imitations.



I've lived in Spain for a while, and I've eaten (more than) my share of all of these classic tapas, but I'm not exaggerating when I say this might've been the best ham and cheese of my life. It took a lot of self-discipline to restrain myself and save room for the next destination...



# La Fábrica



As soon as we entered this colorful, crowded locale we were welcomed with the sights and smells of seafood. We gathered around an old barrel-turned-table and ordered **albariño** wine to accompany the **salpicón** (a kind of seafood salad) and **boquerones** (marinated anchovies) that Tessy suggested. I was quickly reminded of one of the most pleasant discoveries I've made in Madrid: despite my preconceived notions about slimy, stinky seafood, here it's a true delicacy.



The *salpicón* consisted of shrimp, mussels, and octopus swimming in olive oil with tomatoes, peppers, and onions. It was fresh, light, and incredibly delicious. A loaf of crusty bread was brought to the table, and Tessy encouraged us to break off pieces and soak them in the flavorful oil.





The *boquerones* were perfectly seasoned and accompanied by olives and crispy potato chips. We were also served a small plate of cheese and chorizo—but it couldn't compete with the perfection we'd already experienced at Cervantes. The star here was most certainly the seafood.

## La Vinoteca

Although we attempted to find a spot at the renowned Casa Alberto, at 9pm on a Saturday night it proved difficult. Instead we went to La Vinoteca, which had a much more **modern and upscale atmosphere** than the previous bars. We ordered wine and cava from an impressively long and detailed list.



To round out the night, Tessy ordered **patatas bravas** (fried potatoes smothered in slightly spicy sauce) and two **pinchos** (small toasts): one topped with spinach, goat cheese, and caramelized onions, and another with potato cake and duck magret.

Although the ambience here was lovely and the wine exceptional, I have to admit that the tapas weren't quite as impressive as their successors. That being said, they were still delicious, and certainly provided a well-rounded sampling of some of Spain's most famous specialties.





For the last course of the evening, Tessy chose a **layered trifle of chocolate and cream**, as well as a sort of **mini apple pie** topped with vanilla ice cream. Although these were pretty standard sweets that didn't exactly scream "Spain," it's hard to complain when there's chocolate involved. After devouring dessert, we parted ways for the night with full bellies, satisfied palates, and a whole lot of newfound knowledge.

## **An interesting aftertaste**

For me the best part of this tour, surprisingly, was not the food itself (although of course it was incredible). As a resident of Madrid, I can get authentic tapas whenever I want, on nearly every street corner. What this experience offered me was the chance to engage with the food I was eating on an intellectual level: to learn why tapas are called tapas, what distinguishes *jamón ibérico* from *jamón serrano*, and so much

more. **It was a lesson in being conscious of what I eat and the history and culture it reflects.**

For travelers who only have a few days to sample the best of local cuisine, who don't speak Spanish, or who simply don't know where to begin, Context provides an ideal solution. **Tessy's insider knowledge and impeccable taste made for an interesting, entertaining, and thoroughly authentic journey through the taverns of Huertas.**

Whether you're a tourist who wants to experience the tapas culture firsthand, or a seasoned local who wants to learn more about the city you love, you'll find what you're looking for in the Context Tavernas and Tapas tour.

**To learn more about Context or book a tour, click [here](#).**